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ABSTRACT

Although assessment has been an activity at Germanna Community College for some time, it has not been a vehicle for integrating efforts within the college to meet its mission. This policy statement was written in order to make assessment a year-round opportunity for all faculty and staff. The assessment process should begin with the establishment of goals and objectives, and the entire faculty should be involved in determining how to measure progress toward these goals. The policy encourages an increase in effectiveness at every level, from the individual within the department to the entire college. Assessment efforts are linked to the college planning process so that the Executive Council and Cabinet will consider recommendations, and resources will be made available for their implementation. The policy defines an integrated Annual Assessment Cycle, which will become an ongoing aspect of the planning and evaluation process throughout the college. Issues related to development, scope, and oversight of institutional effectiveness, resources, and assessment and planning, are discussed. The levels of institutional assessment are presented in three parts: (1) assessment of the college mission and goals; (2) assessment of units, divisions, departments, and committees; and (3) individual assessment. Provided are diagrams of the annual assessment cycle and components of group assessment. (VWC)

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Germanna Community College

Institutional Effectiveness Policy Statement

Adopted by the Executive Council, January 23, 1996

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Although assessment has been an activity at Germanna Community College for some time, it has not been a vehicle for integrating efforts within the College to meet the College's mission. The policy statement which follows aims at making assessment a year-round opportunity for all faculty and staff. The Policy encourages an increase in effectiveness at every level, for the individual within the department to the entire College. Assessment efforts are linked to the College planning process, so that recommendations will be considered by the Executive Council and Cabinet, and resources will be made available for their implementation. The Policy defines an integrated Annual Assessment Cycle, which will become an ongoing aspect of the planning and evaluation process throughout the College.

Assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of academic and service programs at GCC is an ongoing and continuous process. The process begins with the establishment of goals and objectives. Assessment involves the entire faculty in determining the most appropriate means for measuring progress toward those goals and objectives. The use of multiple assessment criteria allows for a thorough evaluation, comparing actual results with expectations. The ongoing review process produces recommendations for action, including the allocation of both short and long-term resources to meet changing needs. As part of the process, goals and objectives themselves will be reviewed and modified on a regular basis.

Assessment takes place at all levels of the College: at the individual level (performance evaluation); at the standing committee level, at the division/department level, at the unit level and at the college level (instructional and non-instructional programs). Participation in assessment is broad-based, including all members of the college community--faculty, staff,

students, administrators, board members, and service region members. Participation in the assessment process itself must be reflected in annual performance evaluations.

Development, Scope and Oversight of Institutional Effectiveness

Assessment of institutional effectiveness is a process which occurs in all units of the College. Units are defined in the Master Plan and include administration, instruction, student services, and financial and administrative services. The units represent major operational divisions of the College. The administration consists of the Local Board, President and Cabinet members. The Cabinet is composed of the heads of the three units which report to the President.

This process is conducted on an annual basis, as well as every five years and ten years. Annually the units conduct assessment activities which will include Student Outcomes Assessment and evaluation of services. Every five years an institutional review of the mission and goals is performed through a more comprehensive examination. Every ten years a self study process is conducted for the purpose of reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

An Institutional Effectiveness Team (IET) provides oversight of the many components of institutional effectiveness. The IET will consist of representatives selected by the Faculty Senate, GSSA and Executive Council and will report to the President in an advisory capacity. Chairs of the standing college committees will meet at least once a semester with the IET for the purpose of review and feedback.

The specific responsibilities of the Institutional Effectiveness Team are to:

- oversee the assessment process;
- ensure that the assessment process is working effectively and in a collaborative manner;
- serve as a conduit for questions and concerns about the assessment process; and
- review and revise the Institutional Effectiveness Policy Statement as needed on a timely basis.

The Institutional Effectiveness Team will meet a minimum of two times per semester. The IET members will serve a term for two years, but will initially consist of a staggered membership with one and two year terms for the sake of consistency in later IET memberships. The decision to discontinue the IET must be presented to and voted on by all college faculty and staff. Discontinuation of the IET would result only if the group were no longer needed.

Resources

Institutional assessment requires adequate financial resources and personnel, to include: support of the Office of Research and Planning; release time for faculty as warranted; assignment of assessment duties as part of a reasonable workload for all staff; and technological support for access to data, data collection and analysis.

The Office of Research and Planning is an integral component of the institutional assessment of effectiveness. This Office also serves as the primary source for data, the development of criteria and instruments utilized in the assessment activities.

Assessment and Planning

The College Master Plan provides a framework in which the assessment of institutional effectiveness takes place. The levels of institutional assessment are (1) Assessment of the College Mission and Goals; (2) Assessment of Units, Divisions, Departments and Committees; and (3) Individual Assessment.

I. Assessment of the College Mission and Goals

Germanna Community College reviews (a) its College Goals and (b) the College Mission regularly.

(a) Germanna Community College reviews its College Goals. Each unit and standing committee at the College prepares an annual progress report based on assessment results (see the cycle diagram below). The progress report will include accomplishments made within the last year and plans for new goals for the future. These unit reports are given to the IET for review. Based on this review, the Director of Research and Planning will compile an institutional effectiveness report. This progress report is submitted to the Executive Council, the Cabinet and ultimately to the President and Local Board for review and appropriate actions. Copies of the progress report are provided to all units of the College and to the community. Unit heads and standing committees will use this regular review of goals to recommend program changes and to provide foundation for subsequent modifications to the mission statement itself.

(b) The College also conducts a comprehensive evaluation approximately once every five years with broad-based community involvement. This is to ensure that the College continues to address

the needs and expectations of its constituencies and that it is succeeding in the fulfillment of the College Mission.

Every five years, the comprehensive review will be conducted by a Task Force for Institutional Effectiveness, involving approximately 70 percent college personnel (faculty, administrators, staff and students) and 30 percent community representatives. This Task Force will be convened by the Director of Research and Planning. The Task Force should convene in 1999 for the next review.

The Task Force for Institutional Effectiveness will use annual reports prepared by the Director of Research and Planning. The Task Force for Institutional Effectiveness will:

- assess the current mission statement by examining the success indicators of previous years;
- identify major commitments that should appear in the statement;
- modify the statement, if necessary;
- develop success indicators with measurable outcomes for each new major commitment; and
- examine the needs and expectations of its constituencies (including environmental scanning, demographic, economic, and political changes).

The Local Board will approve the Mission and it will then be sent to the VCCS for final approval. The college community will be given the feedback from the five-year review and

everyone will receive a copy of the final report and the revised Mission Statement. This report, which results from the five-year review, will serve as a centerpiece for governance to provide focus and direction at the College. The goals and mission of the College will be promoted community wide in order that the public understands what the College is striving for in providing higher education for the community.

II. Group Assessment: College Units, Divisions, Departments and Committees

Assessment of Germanna Community College programs and services is continuous for the purpose of promoting educational accessibility, quality, equity and vitality. These evaluations measure the extent to which programs and services support the College's Mission and Goals. Assessment of programs and services is integrally linked with the college's planning cycle and budget development process.

Each year the four college units and standing college committees are responsible for reporting on their effectiveness in achieving their respective goals and objectives. The units and standing committees will each work collaboratively within their respective memberships to develop their assessment plans. The units and committees will report on the process by which the collaboration occurred and their reports will include:

- *what* is assessed (goals and objectives),
- *how* the review is conducted (assessment strategies and data) and results are reported;
- *who* is responsible for overseeing the assessment activities (personnel directly involved); and
- *when* assessment activities are conducted (including a timeline).

III. Individual Assessment: Faculty, Staff, and Administration

All employees of Germanna Community College strive for excellence in performing their professional responsibilities in support of the programs and services offered to the service region. Faculty and staff members and administrators establish one-year, personal goals and/or performance criteria in support of the College's mission, vision, values, and goals, agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor, which serve as the measure for that employee's professional evaluation at the end of the fiscal or academic year. The extent of achievement of the individual goals and/or performance criteria then provide input into the College Business Plan in the distribution of merit pay salary increases for the succeeding fiscal year.

"Vision without action is merely a dream.

Action without vision just passes time.

Vision with action can change the world." -- Joel Arthur Baker

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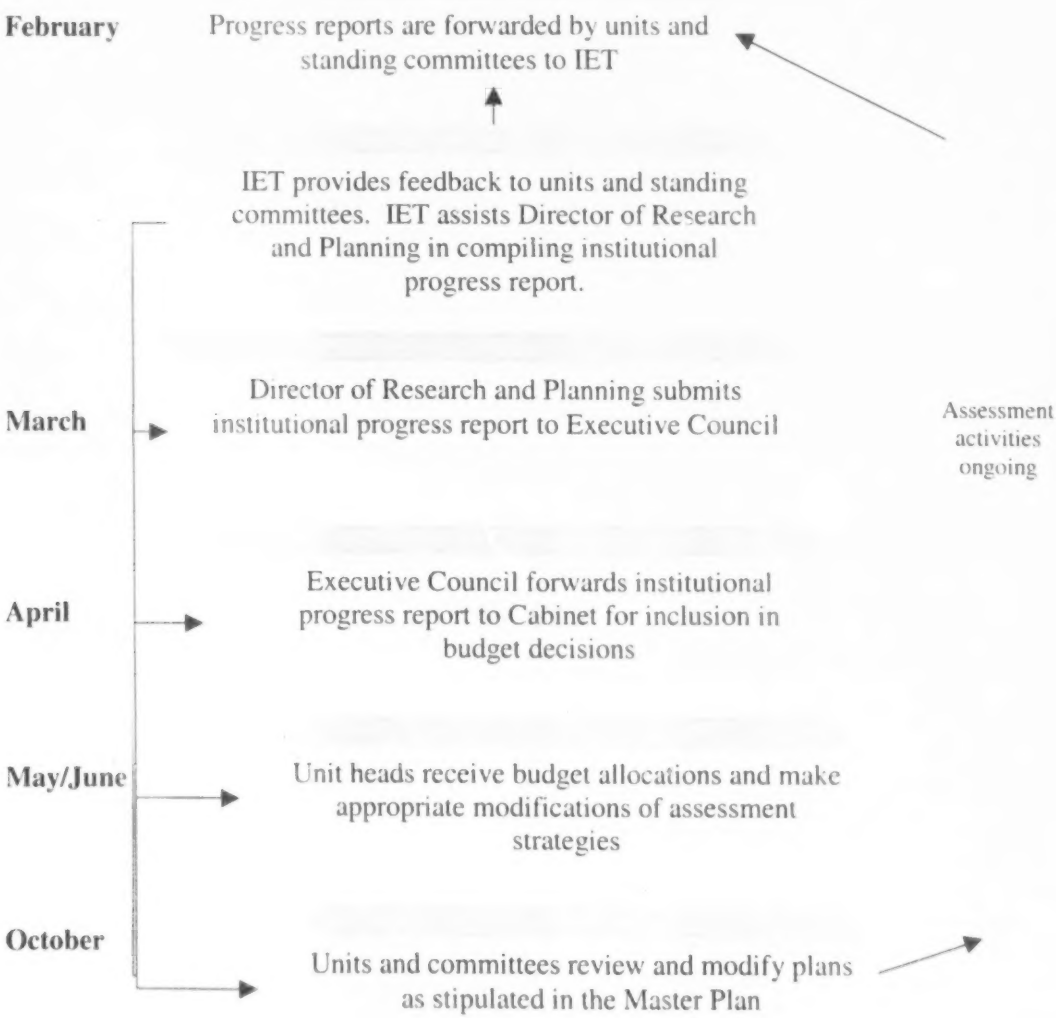
Annual Assessment Cycle

Assessment activities are ongoing throughout the year. During the year there must be checkpoints for the purpose of ensuring that the process of assessment continues to move forward. The following cycle offers an illustration of how the assessment process flows:


February
Progress reports are forwarded by units and standing committees to IET
IET provides feedback to units and standing committees. IET assists Director of Research and Planning in compiling institutional progress report.
March
Director of Research and Planning submits institutional progress report to Executive Council
Assessment activities ongoing
April
Executive Council forwards institutional progress report to Cabinet for inclusion in budget decisions
May/June
Unit heads receive budget allocations and make appropriate modifications of assessment strategies
October
Units and committees review and modify plans as stipulated in the Master Plan

The Director of Research and Planning will keep abreast of how the College's assessment process fits within the state outcomes reporting mandates. The Director of Research and Planning will communicate with each unit head the information necessary for inclusion in the unit's annual assessment plan.

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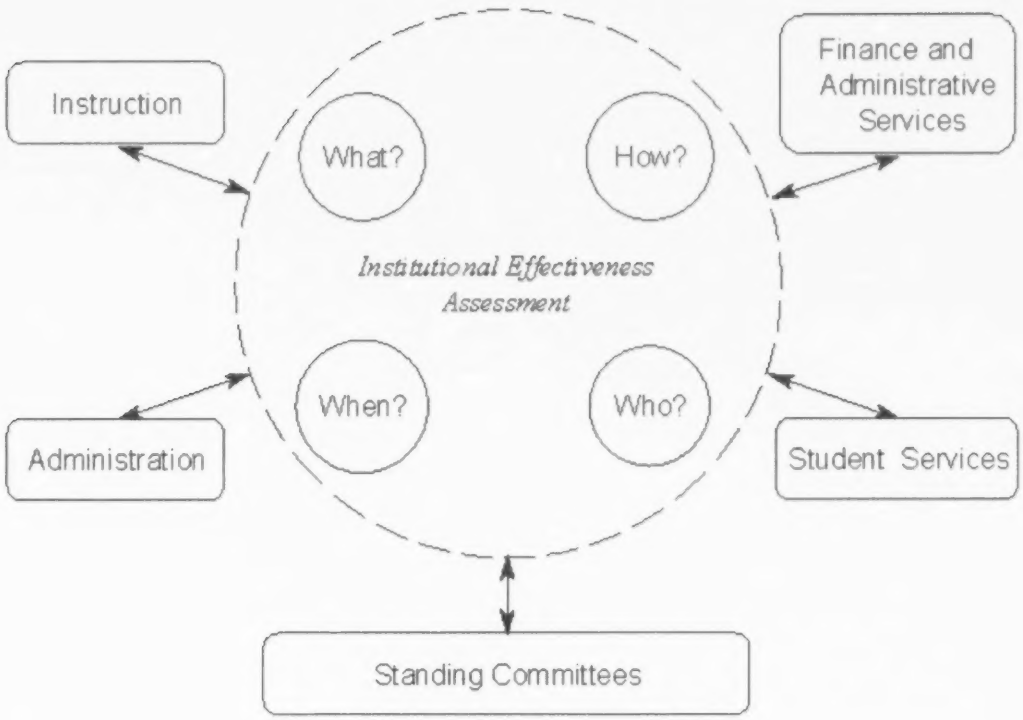
Components of Group Assessment



Institutional assessment will follow an annual cycle as depicted in the next section.

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